

Gender and Environment: Planning for a Better Future

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WIDTECH held its first regional gender and environment workshop April 21-25, 1998, in Uganda. The objectives of the workshop were:

- To share best practices for integrating gender into environmental planning;
- To improve district officers' abilities to understand, advocate, and access resources for environment and gender issues; and
- To foster networking among district-level planning officers and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working on environment and gender issues at the local, regional, and national levels.

To encourage future collaboration, the workshop focused on the work of district-level officers in the six pilot districts of the National Environment Management Authority: Arua, Kabale, Kasese, Masaka, Mbale, Mbarara, and Tororo. Key participants were district environment officers (three were women), district gender officers, and district community development officers. In addition, representatives from the National Environment Management Authority, district and national NGOs, and USAID/Kampala attended. USAID offices and missions in Namibia and Kenya also nominated individuals from their countries to participate in the workshop. Among 33 participants, 20 (61 percent) were women.

BACKGROUND

Uganda was selected for the workshop site for several reasons. USAID/Kampala's Strategic Objective Two (SO2) calls for critical ecosystems to be conserved to sustain biological diversity and enhance benefits to society. At the same time, SO2 strongly advocates the integration of gender considerations into environmental planning. Uganda's National Environment Action Plan makes a strong commitment to integration of gender analysis and participatory approaches to environmental planning. The National Environment Management Authority in Uganda is charged with helping to formulate environment policies and provide guidance in environmental impact assessments, environmental education, and training of district environment officers. Uganda also has a Ministry of Gender and Community Development that has received significant Presidential support. The ministry has trained many district gender and community development officers and some environment officers. District environment officers have widespread responsibilities, such as developing environmental strategies and funding proposals based on participatory rural appraisals conducted in collaboration with district community development officers or district gender officers.

Before the workshop, a thorough needs assessment was undertaken, case studies were developed, and district-level officers were consulted to incorporate their views into the workshop program. A modified version of an environment impact assessment model was used as an Environment Assessment and Planning Framework into which gender issues were integrated.

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

Environment Assessment and Planning Framework. The Environment Assessment and Planning Framework outlines steps on how to collect and analyze social and biophysical data to determine who is using resources and how; who or what is affected by the different uses of resources



Once a month, the East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) of Uganda publishes a four-page newspaper on environmental issues, *NatureWatch*, which is inserted into the *New Vision* newspaper. WIDTECH sponsored the March 27, 1998, issue of *NatureWatch*, which was distributed to 36,000 *New Vision* readers, 2,000 schools (8,000 copies), EAWLS members (500 copies), government organizations and NGOs (1,500 copies), and workshop participants for redistribution (4,000 copies).

The insert focused on gender and the environment, including a definition of gender analysis, the links between gender and environment, and opinions in support of linking the two from leading political figures.

It also featured an innovative USAID-funded project that combines concern for the environment with the prospect of income generation for women. The project supports the production of shea butter, an edible oil made from shea nuts that also is used in skin creams. The production of shea butter by women is environmentally more friendly than the production of charcoal, which women currently produce.

NatureWatch announced the workshop, generating almost 50 requests for attendance, none of which could be met since the workshop was not an open event. However, this clearly indicates a strong interest in the topic.

and how; and who decides who can use resources and how they can use them. Important aspects of an environmental assessment are identifying and involving all relevant stakeholders. Under this framework, the workshop outlined how and when to collect gender-disaggregated data, what kind of data to collect, and why these data are necessary to understand fully how natural resources are currently being used and the associated environmental and social impacts. Participants worked on mini-cases that showed how to use the resulting data to plan natural resource management which is economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable. Throughout the workshop, considerable emphasis was placed on the inclusion of communities and stakeholders, both men and women, in all stages of resource management.

Regional Networks. To foster regional networks, USAID-nominated participants from Kenya and Namibia presented their cases on the benefits of gender analysis in environmental planning. Dorothy Wanyama from the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya discussed a case on the introduction of integrated pest management in the Trans Nzoia District in Kenya where the absence of good gender analysis and faulty assumptions on resource management led to low participation in on-farm trials. Anna Davis and Lina Kaisumia from the Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation Project in Namibia presented a case on how strengthening women's roles in natural resource management led to good planning and additional benefits to their communities.

Advocacy Planning. The ideas and analytic approaches learned in the first three days of the workshop were reinforced by a day spent on advocacy planning. Participants learned how to identify supporters and opponents, how to address their strengths and weaknesses, and how to plan appropriate messages for different groups. Groups of district environment officers, gender officers, community development officers, and NGO representatives each created a vision and mission statement about their own work. Together they developed skits showing how, from their different

positions, they could advocate integrating gender issues into environmental planning.

Gender-Sensitive Participatory Research. To be responsive to Uganda's decentralization program, which requires that planners and communities work together to investigate, analyze, plan, and evaluate opportunities and constraints in resource management, participants practiced three different participatory methods for involving the community in its own analysis, keeping the roles of and impacts on men, women, and children visible. These methods were a gender analysis matrix¹, Vann diagram, and resources and benefits map.

District Case Studies. The six district teams, with the assistance of other participants, developed their own cases by identifying a particular problem (e.g., water pollution, deforestation, garbage problems). They then analyzed the case to identify (1) the problem, (2) who was affected, and (3) when, where, and how the problem existed and affected people and resources. Next, they planned how they would address the problem and whom they would include in that action. These plans are intended to provide a basis for a follow-up workshop on how participants have been able to use these tools in their own districts.

District Action Plans and Recommendations. Each district group developed action plans for the next year. Many of these plans included commitments to advocate with their district colleagues and communities as well as to conduct gender and environment assessments at the district level and below. The recommendations that they put together for the National Environment Management Authority and USAID/Kampala called for additional technical and resource support for training and gender and environment assessments at the local level.

¹ A. Rani Parker, 1993. *Another Point of View: A Manual of Gender Analysis Training for Grassroots Workers*. New York: UNIFAM.

LESSONS LEARNED

As a result of the workshop, the following lessons were learned:

- Gender sensitivity among district-level environment officers and a favorable policy are necessary but not sufficient for ensuring the integration of gender into environmental planning. Gender analysis provides the tools that enable planners to turn policy into action planning.
- Gender analysis helps describe the different ways men and women have access to and control of natural resources. Understanding these differences will provide planners and the community with the information necessary to predict who will be stakeholders and who will need to cooperate in any change in resource use.
- Gender analysis will help to identify the expected impact of both current and proposed natural resource use on men, women, and children.
- Women, as well as men, play an important role in maintaining, improving, and monitoring the use of natural resources. In Uganda, women have the chance to be involved in the management of natural resources because one-third of every local council is required to be women.
- Including women as well as men in project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation will address broader community constraints and interests in environmental planning.
- A number of successful methods already exist for gender-sensitive participatory appraisals. Such efforts can ensure that sex-disaggregated data are collected and that women's voices, as well as men's, are heard in environmental planning.
- Advocacy on gender issues targeted to key decision-makers has to be maintained so that they understand why it is critical to integrate gender concerns in natural resource management and environmental planning.

WIDTECH supports innovative approaches to technical assistance and training that take into account women's roles and contributions and enhance the effectiveness of USAID's development assistance.

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